

REMARKS

The Office Action of July 12, 2005 has been received and carefully reviewed. In response, claims 1, 17, 20, 30, 44, and 54 have been amended without narrowing the scope thereof, and claims 1-54 remain pending in the application. Entry of the above amendments is requested under 37 CFR § 1.116 as presenting the claims in condition for allowance or in better form for consideration on appeal and complying with formal requirements set forth in previous Office Actions, without requiring further searching and without adding new matter. Reconsideration of the pending claims is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicants note with appreciation the indication in the Office Action that claims 13, 14, 28, 29, and 31-53 are allowable, and that claim 54 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112. Applicants further note the indications that the IDS filed with the response of May 12, 2005 has been considered and that the previous amendments to the specification and claims have overcome prior objections to the drawings and the claims.

By the above amendments, claims 17 and 54 have been amended by replacing “member” with --member-- following “second” to address the informalities noted in paragraph 1 of the Office Action. In addition, claim 54 was amended to address antecedent basis issues with respect to “said adjustable spring device”, and similar amendments were made to claim 30 to address the same issue under 35 U.S.C. § 112 (paragraph 3 in the Office Action). Independent claims 1 and 20 have also been amended above to more clearly indicate the unique dual spring moduli features of the invention without adding new matter, whereby the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and 35 U.S.C. § 103 are believed to have been overcome.

The invention relates to wire gripping devices and compression cylinders for welding wire feeders in which spring mechanisms with two or more spring moduli are provided along first and second portions of the spring device or cylinder stroke to facilitate wire feeding gripping force generation for a wide range of welding wire types. As discussed further below, the primary reference Kensrue 6,568,578 does not teach or suggest this feature of the pending claims, but rather requires user adjustment to change gripping force, and accordingly does not provide two spring moduli along two portions of the stroke. Accordingly, the pending claims are believed to be in condition for allowance and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

I. CLAIM OBJECTIONS

The Office Action noted informalities with respect to claims 17 and 44, which have been addressed in the above amendment, whereby Applicants respectfully submit the objections have been overcome.

II. REJECTION OF CLAIM 54 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 54 was rejected as indefinite for failure to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter regarded as the invention under 35 U.S.C. § 112. The phrase “said adjustable spring device” has been deleted from claim 54 by the above amendment, whereby the rejection thereof under 35 U.S.C. § 112 has been overcome, and Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of claim 54 as amended above. In addition, Applicants note that a similar amendment was made to claim 30 to address the same issue.

III. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1-6, 11, 12, 15-24, 26, 27, AND 30 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-6, 11, 12, 15-24, 26, 27, and 30 were finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Kensrue 6,568,578. Independent claim 1 provides a wire gripping device for a welding wire feeder, and has been amended above to clearly recite that the spring mechanism applies *a first range of gripping forces along a first portion of the spring device stroke with the force produced by the first spring modulus and a second range of gripping forces along a second portion of the stroke with force produced by the second spring modulus*. Also, Independent claim 20 has been amended above to recite that the cylinder applies *a first range of gripping forces along a first portion of the cylinder stroke with force produced by the first spring modulus and a second range of gripping forces along a second portion of the stroke with force produced by the second spring modulus*. The above amendments do not add new matter, wherein support can be found at least on page 5, line 11 through page 6, line 7 in the specification. Further, this feature of claims 1 and 20 is clearly neither taught nor suggested in Kensrue, in which the operator *needs to* flip the adjustment spacer 110 to change the engagement force from a first amount to a second amount (SEE col. 10, lines 22-24). The different gripping forces of Kensrue are thus applied for different settings of the spacer 110 and Kensrue appears to only provide a single modulus along the stroke for a given spacer setting. Applicants therefore believe that claims 1-6, 11, 12, 15-24, 26, 27, and 30, as

amended above, are not anticipated by Kensrue and respectfully request reconsideration thereof under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

IV. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 7-10 AND 25 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 7-10 and 25 were finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Kensrue 6,568,578 in view of Tabellini 5,775,619. Applicants submit that the proposed combination of Kensrue 6,568,578 with Tabellini 5,775,619 fails to teach or suggest each and every element of claims 7-10 and 25, and further that there is no motivation or suggestion for the proposed combination, whereby reconsideration and allowance of these claims is respectfully requested. Claims 7-10 depend from amended independent claim 1 and claim 25 depends from independent claim 20. As discussed above with respect to amended claims 1 and 20, Kensrue 6,568,578 fails to teach or suggest a first range of gripping forces along a first portion of the cylinder or spring device stroke with force produced by the first spring modulus and a second range of gripping forces along a second portion of the stroke with force produced by the second spring modulus. Tabellini likewise fails to teach or suggest this feature. Therefore, the proposed combination does not render dependent claims 7-10 and 25 obvious.

Furthermore, as discussed in the previous response, the winding rollers of Tabellini are constructed for radial force with helix springs being wound up during cover extension and being unwound during cover retraction, wherein there is no teaching or suggestion of compressing or stretching the springs of Tabellini in an axial direction. Applicants also note that any advantages of concentrically arranged springs in Tabellini with regard to obtaining precise linear elastic reaction forces resulting from helix springs being wound up *radially* during cover extension and being unwound during cover retraction would not be understood by a person of ordinary skill in the art as providing any suggestion or motivation with respect to *axial* spring forces. The springs of Tabellini are loaded by fixing one end and rotating the other with respect thereto about the spring's axis, and Tabellini does not appear to teach provision of multiple different spring moduli, even in the rotational sense. Thus, the proposed combination of Kensrue 6,568,578 with Tabellini 5,775,619 fails to teach each and every element of claims 7-10 and 25 as amended above, and there is no motivation or suggestion for combining these references with respect to amended claims 1 and 20. Reconsideration and allowance of dependent claims 7-10 and 25 is therefore respectfully requested under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

V. CONCLUSION

For at least the above reasons, the currently pending claims 1-54 are believed to be in condition for allowance and notice thereof is requested.

Should the Examiner feel that a telephone interview would be helpful to facilitate favorable prosecution of the above-identified application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number provided below.

Should any fees be due as a result of the filing of this response, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the Deposit Account Number 06-0308, LEEE200293.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING (37 CFR 1.8a)

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